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Building professional capital

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Building professional capital: Development of supervision competencies in Trainee Educational Psychologists for application in future practice

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Supervision in EP practice

- ▶ Supervision is regarded as a requirement of professional practice in the UK and as an integral part of the discourse of educational psychologists (Leadbetter, Dunsmuir & Gibbs, 2015).
- ▶ Supervision related skills support many areas of practice in Educational Psychology but are not currently delivered as core training
- ▶ Development of learning in this area has taken place largely in the field and from external training events
- ▶ This approach has been invaluable but may not address the complexity and practical training experiences required to meet current professional demands
- ▶ Supervision competencies are wide ranging supporting the development of leadership skills, effective professional peer support, effective collaboration and joint working

Supervision – where it stands today

- ▶ *While skills of supervision and reflective practice are core elements of training and although educational psychologists may have a distinctive skill set in consultation and counselling and be well placed to become supervisors, it does not necessarily imply that they possess the skills required for effective supervision (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013).*
- ▶ Supervision is conducted by many psychologists but until recently formal continuous training and standards have been neglected
- ▶ Supervision is now seen as a set of **core professional competencies**
- ▶ Current competency models identify a number of **strands** reflecting knowledge, skills and values which must be addressed to ensure adequate training and development of the **trainee and supervisor**
- ▶ Frameworks now exist which reflect both overarching concepts and skills permeating all aspects of professional development within supervision

Competencies for Supervision – overarching principles

- ▶ Professional development is a **lifelong** undertaking and is supported by supervision
- ▶ Requires close attention to **diversity** issues
- ▶ Involves **legal and ethical** issues
- ▶ **Personal and professional** factors impact on supervision
- ▶ **Self and peer assessment** need to be ongoing throughout professional life

Joint Working Party on Supervision Training across Strathclyde and Dundee MSc Educational Psychology Programmes

- ▶ Working Party to consider training of trainees in supervision skills
- ▶ Way forward emerged from discussion about the importance of supervision skills and the need for developed curricular models
- ▶ We explored what we are currently doing in this area exchanging ideas and developing our current curriculum, mapping these on to BPS Standards
- ▶ We considered implications of broad conceptualisations of supervision skills and contexts involving for example *ethics and issues affecting racial minority and disability*

Reflective activity 5 mins

- ▶ What does the idea of supervision competencies mean to you?

Supervision in EP training

- ▶ BPS Standards for training programmes in Educational Psychology in Scotland – do not set out core competencies in supervision other than to
- ▶ 2.9 ensure that they seek, secure and make effective **use of supervision**, consultation and other resources to improve and extend knowledge, understanding and skills.
- ▶ 10.5 engage in, learn from, **and demonstrate skills in** interactive supervision processes.

Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency (SOPs, 2015)

- ▶ HCPC having become the regulatory body has subsumed BPS aims requiring educational psychologists in their professional relationships to
- ▶ “...be able to communicate effectively...” (HCPC, SOPs, 2015, Section 8)
- ▶ “...be able to **support the learning** of others in the application of psychological skills, knowledge, practices and procedures...” (Section 9.9)
- ▶ “... be able to reflect on and review practice...” (Section 11)
“...understand the value of reflection on practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection...” (Section 11.1)
- ▶ **and further** “...be able to reflect critically on their practice and consider alternative ways of working...” (Section 11.3)
- ▶ **as well as** “...understand models of **supervision** and their contribution to practice...” (Section 11.4)

Professional Competencies

- ▶ The development of professional competence involves
- ▶ *'...the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community served...'* (Epstein & Hundert, 2002, p.226)
- ▶ *But competency-based supervision has not always been 'stellar'* (Falender & Shafranske, 2012, p.133)
- ▶ *'...For EPs, the ability to give and receive supervision is a core professional competence, yet one that is often neglected...'* (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010. *Professional Supervision: Guidelines for Practice for Educational Psychologists*, BPS: DECP. p13)
- ▶ The major objective of a competency-based approach is that trainees and professionals are trained and evaluated against a common standard based on competency strands. Competency means attainment of knowledge as the first step with attention to performance and outcomes as subsequent steps.

Supervisor Competence

- ▶ In UK a working group of EPs developed practice guidelines for supervisors defining specific competencies across 6 levels: Training, values, context, knowledge, skills, evaluation. (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010)
- ▶ In USA based on work by a convened task force the APA produced supervision guidance (2014) making explicit the need to identify supervision as a distinct area of practice requiring specific and ongoing training and skill development.
- ▶ **However...**while both documents offer frameworks for enhancing supervisory competence both are based on practice review rather than empirical research AND on the views of supervisors rather than the experiences and needs of supervisees.

Supervision and Reflective Practice

- ▶ Development of Supervisory and Reflective Practitioner Skills and Knowledge in Training
- ▶ Study of trainee EP supervision (Atkinson and Wood, 2007) gives a mandate for consistency and continued evaluation of the supervisory process
- ▶ Supervision facilitates reflective practice offering a way for both parties to access deeply embedded personal knowledge (Freshwater, 2007)
- ▶ Reflective practice aims to develop professional principles, values and actions and so requires taking responsibility and ownership of the learning process forming the basis for **critical reflection** and reflexivity (Bolton, 2014)



Competency based framework or model of supervision (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010)

- ▶ The supervisee's growth is reflected in the key concept of *lifelong professional development*
- ▶ The competency based framework refers to the learning process as a *continuous, mutual growth process in both supervisor and supervisee* which needs to continue within professional contexts
- ▶ Key strands: knowledge, skills, values and context

Applying a competency model in training via reflective self-efficacy

- ▶ We designed a competency-based framework for self-assessment and support in the development of supervisory skills
- ▶ Self assessment was based on the principles of self efficacy
- ▶ Self assessment was supported by feedback from supervisees, colleagues and others to provide evidence of development of specific competencies and areas for improvement
- ▶ A self efficacy questionnaire reflected key competencies: **knowledge, skills and values** which must be addressed to ensure adequate training and development of trainees and supervisors in the **supervision alliance**
- ▶ A self-efficacy tool for supervision (presented later) and based on one developed by Dundee University to assess learning outcomes and for trainees to identify own personal targets for each of the 7 modules

Supervision includes a number of complex strands, for example

- ▶ **Knowledge:**
- ▶ epistemology, theory, research, core practice issues;
- ▶ models of supervision, research on supervision and understanding of the growth process in supervision;
- ▶ ethics and diversity issues in supervision;
- ▶ knowledge of evaluation and measures of impact and outcomes

Skills strand

- ▶ **Scientific thinking** and teaching and didactic skills e.g. explain role of epistemology in professional practice contexts, support understanding of the role of theory and frameworks
- ▶ **Relationship skills** – understanding and building the supervisory alliance and extending learning to leadership and collaborative working
- ▶ **Assess learning needs** by providing effective formative and summative feedback
- ▶ **Promote self assessment and reflection** in supervisor and trainee
- ▶ **Set appropriate boundaries** and seek support or consultation when issues go beyond boundaries e.g. mental health or conduct issues

Values strand

- ▶ **Responsibility** for clients of supervisee rests with supervisor
- ▶ **Respect** underpins all supervision
- ▶ Sensitivity to diversity
- ▶ **Capacity to balance** support and challenge effectively
- ▶ **Empowering** experience
- ▶ Close adherence to **ethical principals**
- ▶ **Commitment** to psychological science and continuing professional development

Contextual strand

- ▶ **Awareness of diversity** and difference in the practice context
- ▶ **Understanding and knowledge** of the systems and contexts in which the trainee is learning: academic, practice, client related, legislative, ethical, political and socio-political
- ▶ **Creating a climate** where honest and respectful feedback is possible

Proposed System for assessment of supervision competencies (Dunsmuir and Leadbetter, 2010)

- ▶ Successful completion of a supervision module
- ▶ Verification of supervision, e.g. evidence of having been observed
- ▶ Documentation of supervision showing diversity in experience
- ▶ Documented supervisee feedback
- ▶ Assessment of supervision outcomes

The reflective learner and practitioner—our approach to teaching supervision skills:

- ▶ Several approaches to teaching and learning supervision competencies were
- ▶ Self efficacy ratings
- ▶ Problem based learning
- ▶ Peer mentoring in set partnerships of 2/3 and an assignment of a peer mentoring log
- ▶ Peer collaboration
- ▶ Taught inputs on supervision and reflective practice

NB The 2 programmes are at different stages of implementation

Self-Assessment of Supervision Skills

Self Efficacy Checklist (for Trainees)

Supervision Self Efficacy - use a rating scale of 1- 5 where 1 is not at all confident and 5 is very confident. Tick the relevant boxes in the table below.		Not at all confident			Very confident	
		1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge and understanding (statements 1 – 4)						
Key skills (statements 5 – 10)						
Values (statements 11- 14)						
Contextual awareness (statements 15 – 16)						
1	Understand the competencies concept and how it is expressed in the context of supervision skills					
2	I can demonstrate knowledge and a critical understanding and of the main theories, principles and concepts related to supervision in educational psychology; research on supervision; the growth process in supervision					
3	I know about ethics and diversity issues in supervision and can demonstrate understanding of the principles of regulatory and ethical frameworks in the practice of supervision within educational psychology					
4	I understand the principals of scientific thinking and can apply these via key frameworks in practice contexts					
5	I can apply in problem-solving approaches effectively					
6	I have well developed skills as a communicator					
7	I know how to build a 'supervisory alliance'					
8	I know how to promote my own and others' self assessment and reflection					
9	I have skills in identifying and managing own learning needs					
10	I have skills in dealing with complexity and ambiguity					
11	I know how to set appropriate boundaries and seek support when these are breached					
12	I know how to provide empowering experiences in a supportive or supervisory context					
13	I am committed to the development and delivery of Educational Psychology and to continuing professional development					
14	I am aware of the implications of diversity and difference in practice contexts					
15	I am aware of the range of key contexts where supervision is required: academic, practice, client- related, legislative, ethical, political, socio-political					
16	I am aware of the important role of 'climate' where honest, constructive and respectful feedback is possible					

Reflections and views

- ▶ Supervision is a core competency in psychology
- ▶ Supervisors need broad skills covering all supervision in psychology
- ▶ BPS and HCPC are still developing clearer guidelines and accreditation processes
- ▶ Competency model remains controversial
- ▶ **Pro:** Clarity of skill sets required and standards and objectives to be met and measured
- ▶ **Against:** places constraints on training, encourages narrower focus, reduces the profession to a set of skills

Training in supervision: tentative suggestions

- ▶ Develop shared trainee/ tutor module on delivering supervision covering all knowledge, skills and values listed
- ▶ Actively link learning outcomes to supervision skill objectives as well as practice objectives?
- ▶ Develop learning opportunities for experienced supervisors including observation and critical feedback

Discussion in small groups of issues arising

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